

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA

CHERYL SAGATAW, DEANTHONY
BARNES, ROBERTA STRONG, and
TRAVIS NELOMS, *on behalf of
themselves and a class of
similarly-situated individuals,*

Plaintiffs,

vs.

MAYOR JACOB FREY, *in his
individual and official capacity,*

Defendant.

Civil Action No.
0:24-cv-00001-ECT/TNL

**DECLARATION OF
ALVIN BUTCHER
IN SUPPORT OF
MOTION TO AMEND
OPERATIVE COMPLAINT
AND TO ADD PLAINTIFFS**

DECLARATION OF ALVIN BUTCHER

I, Alvin Butcher, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, declare as follows:

1. I am forty eight years old.
2. I'm a enrolled member of White Earth, Mississippi Band Ojibwe.
3. I have PTSD, depression, and I have had four surgeries on my right foot. It has metal in it, the metal kept not taking, and now there's mersa [sp] in my foot. It felt like rushed surgery, to get me in and out. That was in 2012 or 2013 I think, and then in 2013 and 2014 I had three more surgeries in the same foot. It has been messed up ever since. It hurts to walk, three of my toes don't bend. They are screwed together and can't flex.
4. I have a background in construction, I've lived in South Minneapolis for most of my whole life, except for a few months. I have kids so I have to stick around.
5. I got evicted during the beginning of COVID, I was working for my landlord for \$300/month, but rent was \$1000/month, and I stopped being able to afford it, and she evicted me. I knew that she wasn't allowed to evict me because of the pandemic protections, but I did not want to contest my eviction because I was worried about how it would impact my record, my rental history, I wanted to build up credibility to get a place of my own.
6. I came to Nenookaasi on my birthday, November 19th 2023. I remember chopping wood in the TeePee with Chico. I was delivering wood to all the yurts at camp to try to make sure everyone had wood, and helping people move tents and fix up their yurts, getting fires going for elders and helping them stay warm. I was staying in a tent. At that first eviction, I lost a lot of stuff because I was busy helping everyone else move their stuff and hadn't had time to move my own belongings before we were told we really had to clear out. I try to help the younger people, the women and girls.
7. For two of the Nenookaasi evictions, all I left with was a backpack and whatever I could fit in it. Everything else I had to leave behind because the cops were rushing us out and they had a big bulldozer. They told me "if you guy's aint out of here, we're still going to clear it out whether you are out of that tent or not." I have never been able to pack up my tent and leave with all my stuff, I've always been rushed out, but sometimes I have been able to keep more belongings than others and take a wagon or a rolly bag with me.
8. Trash accumulates so much around camp because of the visitors, the people who don't live here. I live here, and I try really hard to keep the site clean. The people who come in the night, the people who stop by, housed people who stop by for any number of reasons to visit and hang out with us, they don't understand that we have to live here. They don't

realize what they're doing when they leave a mess, they don't think about how having trash around our camp is harmful to us, attracts rats and pests. We throw out our garbage in trash cans, but then people who don't live at the camp will come and rifle through it and pull stuff out and make a huge mess. Having garbage cans really does help, although we fill them up faster than they get emptied. Sometimes I will haul our full garbage cans out and find big dumpsters to empty them into or trade them for empty ones because I want people to have a way to throw trash out and not make a mess. I got a big roll of garbage bags last night and then gave everyone else here one, so that its easier for everyone to keep things clean.

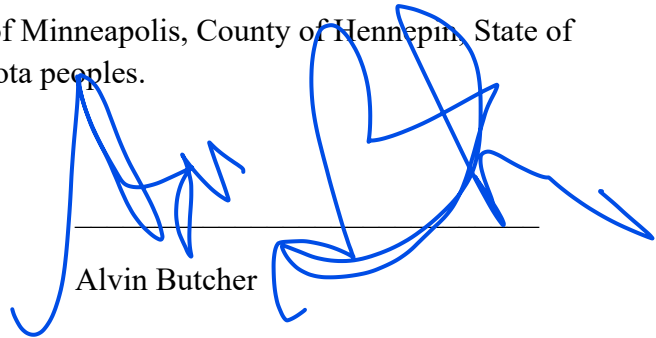
9. At the 26th and 14th eviction, I was in my tent. I had no idea that an eviction was coming that day. I hear someone say "everyone, we have to go, the cops are here." That was one of the evictions where I could only grab a backpack. I had to leave behind my clothes, blankets, bins of food, paperwork, phone chargers, a solar panel, a car battery.
10. At the 22nd and 16th I was at a doctor's appointment. I didn't lose much at that eviction, just a tent and a few blankets. I hadn't even had time to get a pillow yet from the last eviction. A lot of times, when donations come, I let others go first to get what they need before I grab anything because I know I can go without most things. So I didn't have much at this eviction.
11. I was living at the camp on 28th and 11th, but I was at my daughters place doing laundry when the fire happened. I got a video sent to me on my phone and saw everything burning. After the fire, they bulldozed my tent. I had a fireproof tin box with all my identity documents in it, but it got bulldozed. I wanted to go back through and look for any of my belongings that could be salvaged, but I couldn't because the cops blocked it off and the city bulldozed everything.
12. I have been woken up from sleep during an eviction to be told "you have ten minutes to get out" by the cops.
13. I was at Nenookaasi on 28th and 14th when I heard about Agate. An outreach worker contacted me at camp, and made some calls, gave me a number to call, the lady called me back and helped me get into a program for single dads. In Minnesota there arent no programs for single dads. They started this new program at Agate, I got accepted to it, and accepted for housing, and I was all set and at the point of looking over options. Then back in April, I lost my phone and my address book, I lost the name of the person who was handling my case and I and wasn't able to get ahold of the person from Agate anymore. I called Agate once but nobody ever called me back. I don't know if I'm still accepted in that program or not. She never got ahold of me again and I don't know how to reach her. Hopefully I can still get that housing. I have been trying to get phones from the programs by ALDIs, but for some reason when I go and ask I can't get approved for a

free phone. I tried a few times also to go in person on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Cola House at the Indian Center, but at the time I didn't know what benefits paper I needed to have filled out.

14. I live at another camp right now, and I've been here for a few months now which is helpful because people know where to find me. My family knows where to find me, my boss knows where to find me. I hate having to pack up and move all the time and worry about where we're going to stay, how long we're going to stay. Stability helps me with depression, repeated evictions is really hard on me for so many reasons.
15. I work for a neighbor, he saw me picking up trash in the alley of my own accord and asked if I wanted to work for him. I paint the inside of his properties, help clean his buildings from top to bottom so he can pass inspections, and keeping the alley and yards of his properties clean from garbage and needles. I do a lot of the work for free, because it needs to get done, but then the more skilled work like painting or cutting grass I get paid for.
16. The repeated evictions mess you up. It makes me not want to buy too many groceries because I don't want to spend money only to have it all get trashed. I don't want to accumulate too many things. But then I have to go to the store more often, but then I don't want to do that either because I don't want to leave my tent alone. It's hard.
17. Some of these girls here are stronger than most of the guys. They keep going through it, sticking around, helping out. I see who helps clean up, I notice that.
18. Nobody from the City has ever offered me storage. If they had offered me a place to store things, I'd have a lot more stuff because I'd be able to keep things during evictions.
19. I don't do shelter beds because me and my lady couldn't be together in a shelter, since we are not married. I'm not going to leave her in a strange environment where I don't know if she is going to be safe or not. I'd rather us sleep on the ground in a tent than lie awake wondering where she is and if she is in danger. I would not want her in a shelter, because she has mental health issues too that shelters are not able to deal with. Shelters don't work for people who have mental health issues. But I don't want her on the streets by herself either.
20. I think that things would be a lot cleaner around here if the City provided more garbage disposal and port-a-potty resources. That would be a huge help. The City doesn't see that. We want to have clean and safe places to go to the bathroom.

I declare under penalty of perjury that this declaration is true and correct.

Executed on September 12, 2024, in the City of Minneapolis, County of Hennepin, State of Minnesota, Treaty-Ceded Territory of the Dakota peoples.



Alvin Butcher